

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

STRATEGIC PLAN for FEDERAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM 2005-2007

Working Together to Save Lives



Federal Women's Program Strategic Plan

The objective of the National Weather Service (NWS) Federal Women's Program (FWP) is to implement initiatives to increase the representation of women in the NWS workforce, particularly in scientific, engineering, and senior level positions. The program supports the career development and advancement of women, including minority women and women with disabilities at NWS.

In 1967, Executive Order 11375 added sex to other prohibited forms of discrimination such as race, color, religion, and national origin. In response to this, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) established the Federal Women's Program (FWP). In 1969, Executive Order 11478 integrated the FWP into the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program and placed the FWP under the direction of EEO for each agency. OPM regulations implementing Public Law 92-261 require that Federal agencies designate a FWP Manager to advise the Director of EEO on matters affecting the employment and advancement of women. This law also requires that Federal agencies allocate sufficient resources for their Federal Women's Programs.

In an assessment done by the NWS Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management (OEODM) in October 2004, women were substantially underrepresented in the NWS workforce. Women represent 46.8% of the National Civilian Labor Force; however, women only represent 18.1% of the NWS workforce. Women are also underrepresented in all of the NWS core mission occupations (Meteorologist, Meteorologist Technician, Electronic Engineer, Electronic Technician, Physical Scientist, Hydrologist, and Information Technology Specialist).

This Federal Women's Program Strategic Plan (FWPSP) is tied to the overall NWS Policy on EEO and Diversity Management. The Diversity Management Strategic Plan and the FWPSP will be used to manage the diversity of our employees by building an inclusive work force; fostering an environment that respects the individual; and offering opportunities for all persons to develop to their full potential in support of atmospheric science. Through this plan, the NWS is seeking to build relationships with women communities and engage them in the NWS's vast scientific and technical operations. The plan calls for strengthening NWS outreach activities in a comprehensive effort to promote partnership opportunities with the women community in three critical areas: employment, education, and training.

NWS FWPSP identifies strategies and goals to eliminate barriers impeding the progress of women. The major programmatic focus will be on transitioning women into scientific and engineering occupational fields, eliminating barriers in the workforce to ensure full utilization and representation at senior levels, and expanding the pool of girls in science and engineering fields. FWPSP helps to ensure equity in promotions, awards, and all employment related actions.

FY 2005-2007 Goals

Goal	Lead Office	Completion
Develop Federal Women's Program web page.	OEODM	Quarter III – FY 2005 Partially Complete. On the OEODM webpage, we have information on the Federal Women's Program and links to helpful sites.
Research NWS recruitment strategies used to target women through professional organizations (e.g., Women in Science), and colleges and universities.	OEODM	Quarter IV – FY 2005 Completed. See details below
Ensure that the requirements in vacancy announcements and the language in ranking factors are not restrictive or biased in nature; area of consideration are broadened, when possible; and review "status only" requirements	OEODM	Quarter III – FY 2006 Not Complete. See details below.
Identify and target institutions that graduate a significant number of women with degrees meeting NWS job needs.	OEODM	Quarter IV – FY 2005 Completed. See details below.
Review SES search and placement procedures and ensure effective outreach tools are utilized to actively recruit qualified women candidates for senior-level position.	OEODM	Quarter II - FY 2006 Partially Complete. See details below.
Establish a relationship with regional FWP Managers.	OEODM	Quarter IV – FY 2005 Partially Complete. The FWP manager has formally met with at least 2 of the NWS regional FWP managers. The OEODM has requested that each NWS region send OEODM a list of their SEPMs and their Focal Points.
Create awareness among NWS female employees of existing executive/leadership training programs.	OEODM	Quarter I – FY 2006 Completed. See details below.

Inform NWS minority employee groups and other Federal government Federal Women's Program Managers about hiring and promotion opportunities and utilize their networks for identifying qualified candidates for senior positions.	OEODM	Quarter I – FY 2006 Not Complete. See details below.
Review NWS internal employment practices undertaken to retain women employees (e.g., use of retention bonuses, awards, promotions, etc.,).	OEODM	Quarter I - FY 2006 Completed. See details below.
Review exit interview procedures, questionnaires, and data for women employees and make recommendations for improvements.	CFO OEODM	Continuously Completed. See details below.

Goal A: Enhance/Develop Employee Potential

1. Establish formal mentoring program for interested female employees.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Identify mentors and mentorees by end of Quarter IV – FY2006

Status: In FY2006, the OEODM established a Mentoring Program and developed a Mentoring Handbook and posted the Handbook and application on the OEODM webpage. The OEODM requested that the NWS DAA send out a notice requesting volunteers to become Mentors and Mentees for a pilot program. OEODM is encouraging NWS employees to participate in the mentoring program and to use the NWS Handbook as a guide.

2. Initiate dialogue to establish long-term relationship with women organizations and advocacy groups, e.g., WIS, FEW, and other professional women organizations.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Initiate dialogue with a minimum of three organizations by end of Quarter IV – FY 2005.

Status: Many NWS employees have established long-term relationships with groups that promote the interest of women and minorities. Many employees are members/officials of such groups. In FY 2007, the OEODM sent employees to participate in the Federal Asian Pacific American Council Conference, the Federally Employed Women Conference, Blacks in Government, and Society of American Indian Government Employees. Each employee has gained a network through these activities which will allow them to further develop the NWS efforts.

3. Research NWS recruitment strategies used to target women through professional organizations (e.g., Women in Science), and colleges and universities.

Lead Office: Human Resources Management Office (HRMO) and OEODM

Completion: Meet with HRMO to discuss the current strategies used to recruit women by end of Quarter IV – FY 2005.

Status: The OEODM FWP Manager developed a list of national women organizations for managers and supervisors to use in their efforts to recruit and hire women. This information is posted on the OEODM website at: <http://www.weather.gov/eeo/docs/Resources.pdf>

4. Ensure that the requirement in vacancy announcements and the language in ranking factors are not restrictive or biased in nature; areas of consideration are broadened, where possible and review “status only” requirements.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review vacancy announcement language and procedures by end of Quarter III – FY 2006.

Status: Because of more immediate concerns and obligations, OEODM was not able to address this milestone during the stated timeframe. This milestone will be addressed in the FY 2008-2009 Plan.

5. Identify and target institutions that graduate a significant number of women with degrees in NWS occupations.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Develop list of candidates by end of Quarter IV - FY2005.

Status: The OEODM has posted a URL on its web site which lists all Women's Colleges in the United States: <http://www.univsource.com/womens.htm>. The link can be found by clicking on "Minority Serving Institutions".

6. Review SES search and placement procedures and ensure effective outreach tools are utilized to actively recruit qualified women candidates for senior-level positions.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Make recommendations to HRMO for correcting any deficiencies by end of Quarter II - FY2006.

Status: The NWS FWPM reviewed OPM's procedures and found that the process is quite open to all employees. The training workshops offered by OPM are specifically offered to those at a certain grade level. Although the SES program appears to be an open clear process, we could not find any outreach efforts from OPM or the DOC specifically used to recruit women. NWS is making some progress in promoting women to senior positions. We currently have 3 female SESers. Two of these SESers are Regional Directors. This milestone needs to be further explored, so the FWPM plans to address it in the FY 2008-2009 Plan.

7. Create awareness among NWS female employees of existing executive/leadership training programs.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review women participation data for executive training program by end of Quarter I - FY2006.

Status: In FY2007 women within NWS formed a Women's in Science Forum. Currently, there are approximately 140 women on the list serv. The topics discussed have ranged from leadership and development training programs to pets. The OEODM FWP Manager is a member. Through the forum she has been able to address questions about EEO and Diversity Management and about personnel issues. In the 3rd quarter of 2008 she plans to develop a comprehensive list of Federal/DOC/NOAA/NWS programs.

8. Create awareness among high-potential NWS female employees of SES opportunities.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Create an SES awareness campaign by end of Quarter III – FY2006.

Status: Because of more immediate concerns and obligations, OEODM was not able to address this milestone during the stated timeframe. This milestone will be addressed in the FY 2008-2009 Plan.

9. Inform NWS minority employee groups and other Federal government Federal Women's Program Managers about hiring and promotion opportunities and utilize their networks for identifying qualified candidates for senior positions.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Secure membership to National FWP Council Employment Program Managers by the end of Quarter I – FY2006.

Status: Because of more immediate concerns and obligations, OEODM was not able to address this milestone during the stated time frame. This milestone will be addressed in the FY 2008-2009 Plan.

10. Review the possibility of offering more career ladder positions.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Meet with HRMO and Office of CFO to discuss the possibility of offering more career ladder positions. What would be the consequences? How can it be done? By end of the Quarter I – FY2007.

Status: OEODM has decided to delete this milestone. The NWS WHCC has an initiative similar to this one. No further action will be taken by OEODM to address this issue.

Goal B: Improve Retention

1. Review NWS internal employment practices undertaken to retain women employees (e.g., use of retention bonuses, awards, promotions, etc.).

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review retention data and make suggestion to correct any deficiencies by end of Quarter I – FY2006.

Status: In the past couple years NWS offices have been asked what they were doing to manage retention. The offices stated that they were allowing employees to work varying work schedules; such as, part-time, AWS 5/4/9, 4-10s, and flexible work schedules with core hours, liberal leave policy during pregnancy and following childbirth, other family situations, and telework. They stated that they were: helping employees feel good about themselves, creating a work environment where individuals are encouraged to work in teams and to treat each other with respect, allowing employees to express their personal and work interests, using the CIYA Program to reward employee achievements, providing employees challenging assignments, encouraging employees to attend Special Emphasis Month Events, establishing mentoring programs, providing training, and promotion opportunities.

During the Women History Training Conference in FY 2007 the OEODM met with NWS women employees from across the country. They voiced their concerns about working for the NWS. The biggest issue appeared to be shiftwork and its effect on child care. The women stated that it is very difficult to work rotating shifts and find someone to watch their kids. They were interested in looking into the possibility of the NWS or NOAA providing a Child Care Subsidy. The OEODM asked the group to develop a White Paper on the issue.

2. Investigate cross training opportunities (training that will allow employees to move between series).

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review position descriptions for specific positions within NWS, discuss with HRMO and make recommendations by end of Quarter II – FY2007.

Status: OEODM has decided to delete this milestone. It is already being addressed by the WHCC.

3. Review exit interview procedures, questionnaires, and data for women employees and make recommendations for improvement.

Lead Office: OEODM and Office of Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)

Completion: Review existing procedures, questionnaires, and data continuously.

Status: OEODM has reviewed the NWS exit interview data. Not all employees are willing to participate in the exit interviews, so the rate of participation is very low. There were no deficiencies identified. OEODM will continue to monitor this process in the FY 2008-2009 Plan.

Goal C: Disseminate Accurate and Compelling Information about Training and Development Opportunities.

1. Review NWS female employee participation in existing skill-building training programs, conferences, and seminars.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review female participation data for training programs by end of Quarter III – FY 2006.

Status: Currently, there is no precise way to collect this information because many training courses are paid with Federal credit cards; SF-82s are no longer required by Federal agencies. In the 3rd quarter of FY2007, NOAA issued guidelines that stated that an SF-82 should be completed and put into the employee's personnel folder. This will allow managers, supervisors, and EEO officials to better track who is getting what training. In the 4th quarter of FY 2008 the FWP Manager will ask the NWS Regional EEO Managers to develop a database which will list the types of training taken and by whom.

2. Promote awareness among NWS female employees of opportunities to compete for managerial, executive and upward mobility training.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review procedures for advertising and notifying employees about opportunities and make suggestions to correct any deficiencies by end of Quarter II - FY2006.

Status: In FY2007 women within NWS formed a Women's in Science Forum. Currently, there are approximately 140 women on the list serv. The topics discussed have ranged from leadership and development training programs to pets. The OEODM FWP Manager is a member. Through the forum she has been able to address questions about EEO and Diversity Management and about personnel issues. In the 3rd quarter of 2008 she plans to develop a comprehensive list of Federal/DOC/NOAA/NWS programs.

3. Review NWS nomination process among women and other employees (GS-6 through GS-13) for participation in leadership, and executive potential programs and other developmental programs.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review procedures for advertising and notifying employees about opportunities and make suggestions to correct any deficiencies by end of Quarter II - FY2006.

Status: Because of more immediate concerns and obligations, OEODM was not able to address this milestone during the stated timeframe. This milestone will be addressed in the FY 2008-2009 Plan.

Goal D: Monitor and Ensure Accountability

The NWS senior-level management is primarily responsible for ensuring and emphasizing efforts to achieve a fully diverse workforce, inclusive of women. OEODM, through existing tracking and reporting mechanisms, will assist the NWS Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Region Directors, Headquarters Directors, Staff Offices, managers and supervisors in accomplishing workforce diversity by implementing and monitoring workforce profiles and measures. The NWS will use the following action items to promote accountability and results with respect to female employment.

1. Periodically update and review organizational female workforce goals and achievements.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review goals and accomplishments semiannually.

2. Submit Annual Status Reports to the OEODM Director on NWS progress towards improving the promotion potential of women.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Annually